

Norman Godbold #66
March 28, 1985

(**This interviewee is in Idaho, and the interview is being conducted over a phone line, I believe. From listening to the dialogue, it is difficult to clearly hear everything that is being said, due to occasional 'beeping' noises. Therefore, there may be gaps in portions of this transcription.**)

Q: Mr. Godbold, what was your job? What were you doing for a living in 1941?

A: Uh... 1939?

Q: 1941.

A: Oh, '49?

Q: '41.

A: Oh, '41! Oh, I'm sorry. Yes, I was Treasurer of the Territory of Hawaii.

Q: O.K., and from there why don't we get into what you remember of that period. Um, you mentioned that you remember Auto Kuehn the German spy who had been working for the Japanese.

A: Right, right, right, right...

Q: What do you recall about him?

A: Well, it started my five year old son, and Kuehn had a son the same age. They were down in kindergarten in Kailua. Mrs. Lorange ran a kindergarten there. So this little boy was quite frail and we felt very sorry for him. He had eczema all over his arms and he used to wear these long gloves. And so he used to come to our house; we lived near the beach, close to the kindergarten, not too far from the Kuehns. So through this situation we met his parents (proposed parents). We later found out they were not married and it was sort of a put together family.

So Kuehns would come down and pick up little Hans (was his name) sometimes after the kindergarten was over; usually about 11:00 or so in the morning. So we got to know them and they invited us over to their house at one time when they had a party. And as usual, people were playing the piano, and others were walking around, and I happened to walk into a study which was lighted and he had a bank of maps (rolled maps) that you pulled down from the top.

Q: Like window shades?

A: Beg pardon?

Q: Like window shades?

A: Yes, you know these sort of rolled maps that you pull down and then you give them a little jerk and they go back up again.

Q: Oh yes.

A: You know... and so he had this sort of a thing, and out of curiosity (I had a drink in my hand) and I pulled one of them down and the map was of Europe and it showed all the German process of conquering Poland and France, and so on and so forth. Then I pulled the second one down and to my shock it was a map of Pearl Harbor. So by that time Kuehns came in and he says, "Oh, there you are." and he kind of turned white and he rolled the map up and said, "Come on, some of the people want to meet you back here." So he got me out of the den; his little den in there.

So when I got down to the office the next morning, I called my Deputy Fire Marshall who was from Naval Intelligence, a (bleep) Officer by the name of Tom Quinn(?), and I told Tom about it and he said, "Oh my God, we better do something about this." So he ran down to the [Alexander] Young Hotel where the Naval Intelligence were operating out of and told them about it. Well, a couple of FBI men came up to see me and I told them about it and they said well just go on and see if you can cultivate this man and see what you can find out.

Well, at one time they invited us over to dinner after that and I could here sort of a clacking way up stairs; way up in the attic (they had a two story house with an attic above) and it sounded like a while this was going on and then he got out and then he said, "Oh, excuse me, I forgot something upstairs." And he goes up and evidently with the door closed I couldn't hear it any more.

So I went back and reported that again. So uh... this was some time before Pearl Harbor. So that's about the story of all I know about it, and then of course I know that in time, on December the 7th I was told that he was horribly excited and went down to visit Loranges, and picked up the little boy and just uh... no, no... no, no... no. It was the next day, a Monday, he went down and picked up the boy or something and Mrs. Lorange said he was quite excited at that time. I suppose by that time, why the FBI were after him.

Q: Yes, he doesn't sound like a very subtle spy, heh.

A: (ha ha) He wasn't. I don't think he was too subtle at all. In fact, I can't understand why he got away with so much, and uh, everything else I know about him is rumor.

Q: You had mentioned when we were talking before that you had...

A: Beg your pardon... I can't hear you.

Q: When we were talking before you mentioned that you had spent the evening before, Saturday night, with Capt. Callaghan.

A: Yes, we were down at the Royal Hawaiian, uh with Dan Callaghan uh, he was a Captain at that time, and Dan Shea who was a Commander. Shea was Skipper of the *Cassin* which was blown up at Pearl Harbor, and Callaghan was Skipper of the San Francisco, which was a cruiser in dry dock. So they escaped, but Callaghan, I asked them both if would stay all night because my mother had room. But Dan Shea said, "No, I'll go back down to the Base." so Callaghan said, "Sure, I'd love to stay over." and so we put him up at my mothers.

So the next day was December the 7th, a Sunday, and then he... uh, when we heard about Pearl Harbor, we woke up and heard this bombing (we were living on Makiki Street then; we had a place in Kailua as well) and so we turned on the radio and found out that the Japanese were attacking. So we called Callaghan, and he was amazed and he said, "I've got to get to the Base." and so I said, "Well, I'll drive you." and so I went up and picked him up and we drove (bleep) to get off yet. It was a terrible mess and many wrecks on the side of the road and I had heard that there was traffic but we didn't see it because we were a little bit late.

Now Shea, instead of... when he got to the Army Navy YMCA, he was so tired he said he thought he'd get a room. Fortunately he did, because he would have been aboard the *Cassin* when it was blown up. So he was saved. And that's about the story. Of course as I say we were informed shortly after that, that Callaghan called me when he could and said that things were pretty bad, but he couldn't say much about it, and suggested that we do what...uh, that maybe my family ought to leave and one thing or another. And I guess that's about the story on that.

Q: O.K., as Territorial Treasurer, you must have known Governor Poindexter pretty well...

A: Very well.

Q: ... and he of course was the Governor who exceeded to General Shorts request to declare martial law and I'd like to have your views on that as someone who was a territorial official at the time.

A: Yes, well at the time, people as I told you the other day, didn't uh... didn't... in retrospect, didn't understand what was going on in Honolulu and the terrible excitement that was going around; and I will say that Poindexter was a very calm, deliberate kind of a person. You couldn't have found anybody more deliberate and calm than he was. But nevertheless, he was under tremendous pressure from the Army and others to declare martial law, because no one knew... everyone thought, as a matter of fact, that the Japanese had transports outside and that would come in and conquer the Islands. And it was pretty obvious that the senses were weak and you could uh.... when you consider that attitude of all of the people at that time, uh... uh... there was nothing else that Poindexter could do. And I think that he was under... I mean people later on found that he had done something

very wrong about declaring martial law. Well, ultimately, it was a very great burden on the civilian population, but at the time that he did declare martial law, uh... uh... certainly anybody, I am sure, a reasonable man, would have done the same thing, even though that were critical of him like Gov. (??), and um....

Q: Did you know Garner Anthony as well as that time?

A: I knew about Anthony quite well, yes.

Q: He seemed like he was pretty well opposed to martial law.

A: Well, he was later; but nobody knows what he thought at that time.

Q: So, he didn't raise any objections at the time that you know of:

A: No, no. Not that I know of. I don't recall any one, because when I was in the Governors office on the Monday morning, the Lt. General was there and there was a great number of military people, including Simons I believe and I think there was the Provost Marshall, and so on and so forth, and Aids and so forth. So there was a great running around and so on. So as I recall, Joe Hartford(??) was the Attorney General then. Joe was a very calm type person too. So I don't think anyone could have found any more calm(c)type people than Poindexter and Hartford, because they were both very fine people.

Q: Did you ever hear Poindexter later on, and years later express any regret for having declared martial law?

A: He might have. I'm sure that most of us felt regret, and uh, I mean as the way things turned out, and I'm sure that Poindexter felt regret too; it was very likely.

Q: What would you say was the worst effect of martial law, the most harmful effect, on the Territory.

A: Well, I think it was in the matter of...(??), was suspended more or less, and you had a military car and all that; (??) had little rights and they set out provisions that you had to comply with, so on and so forth. I presume that they thought that this was... or the military thought that this was the right thing to do. And I'm told of Midway, of course it was always a threat, of uh... of an invasion of Hawaii.

Q: What would you say had the greatest impact of martial law on your functions as Territorial Treasurer.

A: Well, uh, we were not controlled to much as far as our government is concerned. I mean I don't think there was any impact except of course as I explained to you before, that we started to destroy some money; the cash that United States currency, that was around and overprint it with the word Hawaii on it.

That was perfectly normal but considering what could have happened at that time...

Q: Do you recall where the printing was done?

A: How the printing was done?

Q: Where it was done?

A: Oh no I don't, but there was um... as I told you before, I had to (Bleep) with Gov. Poindexter right after Pearl Harbor, and he contacted someone in Washington and later contacted me and told my they were sending a man down to take charge. And this man turned out... I think his name was Tree(?), and from the Treasury Dept. and um... He took over. He created a committee of myself and some of the bankers in town; gathered together all the cash together for purposes of destruction of it and certify that it had been destroyed. And then of course they printed (Bleep) out of Washington (I don't know the (?)) on Hawaii... on overprint that was the stamp name Hawaii on it; so that in the event of an invasion, that money could be disclaimed and there would be no possibility of using Federal money.

Q: I see. Could you describe how the currency was destroyed?

A: Yes, all the banks counted their money and then we had someone to check it all out. And they brought it up in sealed packages and they brought it up the crematory in the Nuuanu Cemetery; all the committee there had to sign on a statement to the effect that it had all been destroyed.

Q: Do you recall how much cash it was that was destroyed?

A: No, I don't recall, no.

Q: Gee, you mentioned when we were talking earlier about some of the men lighting up cigars with some of the money (laughter).

A: Uh, yes, well Tree(?) was in charge and I don't recall who suggested it, but somebody did and brought a box of cigars and one of the bankers opened up one of the packages and it was a large denomination of bills; and passed one out to each person who would light up a cigar with it, you know.

Q: Probably the only time in your lives that you got to do that!

A: Right.

Q: Is there anything else in that period that you can recall, particularly that sticks in your memory?

A: Uh, not particularly, I mean... all of where and what was going on you know, the attack on Midway and all of this and that. And incidentally, my first cousin was B.D. Godbold was on

Midway; he was the executive officer to [RADM Milo F.] Dramel.

Q: Oh, I see, so was...

A: Wake Island I think it was.

Q: Was he captured as well?

A: Yes, he was captured. He was a prisoner of war until after the War.

Q: It must have been quite an ordeal.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Well, I thank you very much for sharing your time, um...

A: Your welcome. I hope you can use the information.

Q: What I'd like to do is send you a couple of things in the mail. I'm going to ask that you sign a release form so that we can make this tape available to historians and other people who are researching on the Pearl Harbor Attack and that period. And I'm along also, I'm going to be sending you a sheet with some personal data on it just for our files, and ask you to fill that in if you wouldn't mind.

A: Alright.

Q: You know, things like address, phone number, and that sort of thing.

A: Yeah, O.K.

Q: And the address that I have for you is... let's see. I... actually don't have one. Can you give me your address?

A: 3812 Moccisin Drive,

Q: And that's in Coeur d'Alene

A: Coeur d'Alene, [Idaho]

Q: 838 what?

A: 83814.

Q: O.K., I'll get that into the mail for you today.

A: O.K.

Q: O.K., thank you very much again.

A: Your welcome.

Q: O.K., good bye.